

Zero Discrimination Association

Agenda item 4

(to clarify – this will be read after the initial Turkish version)

Mr.Chairperson, distinguished participants,

Turkey has been hosting a high number of refugees from Syria. According to official statistics for 2016, the number of Syrian refugees living in Turkey is three million; 40-50 thousand of these are estimated to be Roma.

Roma communities arriving in Turkey from Syria do not want to live in refugee camps as they are treated with prejudice and discrimination by other residents of the camps.

Instead of staying in the camps, they generally live in or near neighbourhoods inhabited by other Roma living in Turkey, in self-established tent cities, 2 square meter rooms or parks.

The fact that Roma refugees do not remain in one place for a long time makes it difficult for them to be registered. As a result of this, some of Roma refugees do not benefit from humanitarian aids provided to other refugees; do not have access to health services and schools.

Improving situation of Roma refugees is not that easy as there is lack of interest within the international community and NGOs working on the subject are not much aware of the unique situation of the Roma refugees. Humanitarian aid programmes do not address the specific situation of Roma refugees. We would like to recommend that special measures are taken to cooperate with Roma NGOs, to prevent discrimination against Roma in camps and to reach Roma outside of camps. We also recommend that humanitarian aid programmes are designed and implemented in a way to address the special needs of Roma refugees.